



Host Families Sought For 4-H International Exchange

Yorktown, Feb. 6 – Local families are needed to host international 4-H exchange delegates. Delegates range in age from 12 to 18, and come to Virginia for one month in the summer or for extended stays of one school year starting in August. There are also adult Japanese chaperones who need host families for two-week periods this summer. Other delegates come from Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Ukraine, Russia, Sweden, Germany, Austria, and Greece. The exchange program is sponsored by 4-H.

The Japanese summer 4-H exchange program is open to families with children 12 to 14 years old. The High School Student exchange programs will accept families without children. “You don’t have to already be involved with 4-H to host; you just need a willingness to share your home and your world,” said Joel Bunn, York County’s 4-H agent. “There is no need to know a foreign language. The delegates all have studied English and are eager to use it. The program gives host families a chance to share their culture, friendship, and family life with an exchange student and at the same time learn about life in another country. The home-stays only last for a short time, but the experience affects the participants for a lifetime.”

Host family applications and brochures about the program are available by contacting your local 4-H Agent: Joel Bunn at 890-4940, email jpbunn@vt.edu; or via mail at York VCE, PO Box 532, Yorktown VA 23690.

The 4-H International Exchange program is one of the largest exchange programs, involving American and international youth from more than 40 countries in the world. Since it began in 1972, more than 40,000 Japanese delegates have stayed with families in 39 states, including Virginia, and more than 6,500 American students have made reciprocal visits to Japan. Last summer Virginia families hosted 32 Japanese delegates; this year the program has high school delegates from Japan, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Russia. Five Virginia 4-H members spent 4 to 7 weeks in Japan.